

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EA-10 /072 W

-----120007 241748Z /46

R 241010Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9776

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 0187

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PERG, CT, NI

SUBJ: DETERIORATION IN CAE-NIGERIA RELATIONS

REF: 77 BANGUI 1953

1. A SERIES OF RETALIATORY DIPLOMATIC EXPULSIONS HAVE CAUSED A SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN CAE-NIGERIAN RELATIONS. AFTER AN INCIDENT INVOLVING THE EMPEROR'S VIETNAMESE DAUGHTER, MARTINE, AND THE NIGERIAN FIRST SECRETARY SANI IDAKWOJI, IN WHICH IDAKWOJI WAS SAID TO HAVE INSULTED MARTINE AND HER HUSBAND, THE GOCAE ON JANUARY 4 DECLARED IDAKWOJI PERSONA NON GRATA AND GAVE HIM 48 HOURS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

2. THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR TRIED FOR OVER A WEEK TO GET AN OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF THE EXPULSION, BUT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY REFUSED. FINALLY THE AMBASSADOR RETURNED TO LAGOS FOR CONSULTATIONS DURING WHICH IT WAS DECIDED TO EXPEL THE CAE CHARGE (THE CAE AMBASSADOR IS IN BANGUI ON LEAVE). THE EXPULSION ORDER WAS ISSUED ON JANUARY 17 AND THE CHARGE LEFT ON THE 19TH. THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR WAS INSTRUCTED TO RETURN TO BANGUI AND TO INFORM THE GOCAE THAT HE, TOO, WOULD SOON BE REASSIGNED.

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3. ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, THE GOCAE IS TRYING TO MAKE UP AND WISHES THE GON TO RECONSIDER THE RECALL OF ITS AMBASSADOR. REPORTEDLY THE CAE FOREIGN MINISTER IS SOON TO VISIT LAGOS WITH A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM BOKASSA FOR OBASANJO. THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR DOES NOT THINK THE GON WILL MODIFY ITS POSITION AND INDEED WILL NOT HURRY TO APPOINT ANOTHER AMBASSADOR TO THE EMPIRE.

4. COMMENT: RELATIONS BETWEEN NIGERIA AND THE EMPIRE HAVE BEEN STRAINED FOR SOME TIME AS A RESULT OF FRICTIONS WITH THE NIGERIAN COMMUNITY HERE AND CAE DEMANDS FOR NIGERIAN ECONOMIC AID (SEE 77 BANGUI 1953). THE NIGERIANS LOCALLY HAVE BEEN CONTEMPTUOUS OF THE EMPIRE AND ITS TRAPPINGS. IDAKWOJI WAS PARTICULARLY OUTSPOKEN AND WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE USED RATHER STRONG LANGUAGE WITH MARTINE. CERTAINLY THE NIGERIANS SEEM TO CARE LITTLE ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS HERE AND MAY BE QUITE CONTENT TO LOWER THE LEVEL OF THEIR REPRESENTATION FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. QUAINHON

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